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## FOLK-LORE COLLECTED AT ROEBUCK, GRENVILLE COUNTY, ONTARIO.

BY W. J. WINTEMBERG.

I COLLECTED the following notes on folk-lore in the summer of 1912, while I was engaged in archæological field-work for the Geological Survey of Canada. Much more material could have been collected had time permitted.

The people at Roebuck are mostly Irish Protestants; there are also a few Scotch; and many of the people of English descent are of the United Empire Loyalist stock.

I also cite some data from Lanark and Leeds Counties.

## LORE ABOUT NATURAL PHENOMENA.

1. An old couple living near Mountain, fifteen miles or more north-east of Roebuck, under whose roof I took shelter during a rainstorm, told me that if there was a rainbow in the morning, there would be another storm, and gave me the following rhyme:—

Rainbow in the morning,  
Sailor's warning;  
Rainbow at night,  
Sailor's delight.

## ANIMAL-LORE.

2. If you kill crickets, other crickets will eat holes in your clothes.
3. To kill toads causes the cows to give bloody milk.

## FOLK-MEDICINE.

4. One of our old neighbors is said to have always put a Bible under his pillow, so that he would not get the nightmare.

5. If you cut your finger-nails every Friday, you will never have a toothache.<sup>1</sup>

6. To cure rheumatism, cut your finger-nails, put the parings with a lock of your hair in a hole bored in a maple-tree, and then plug up the hole. Do this secretly, and as long as the tree lives you will be free from rheumatism.

7. To cure a snake-bite, kill a hen, open its breast, and put the entrails around the wound.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare John G. Bourke, "Popular Medicine, Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande" (JAFL 7 : 136); and Hoffman, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> In Devonshire, England, according to Dyer's English Folk-Lore (p. 137), "a chicken is killed, and the wound thrust into the stomach, and there allowed to remain till the

MISCELLANEOUS LORE.

8. ANCIENT GRAVES. — The occurrence of graves on the Roebuck site made the spot uncanny to a few of the people, and after nightfall, as Scott says, —

“Grey superstition’s whisper dread,  
Debarr’d the spot to vulgar tread.”

During my stay at Roebuck I lived in a tent amid the graves in the middle of the site, and was regarded by some as very courageous. A local Irishman, in fact, informed me that no amount of money would tempt him to sleep on the hill. An old Irish woman formerly residing in the neighborhood claimed that any one living on the place would be unlucky, and that whoever ventured to plough the site would die soon after.<sup>1</sup> It is said that, as this warning was not heeded by the owner of one of the fields covered by the site, he died shortly afterwards. The son also ploughed the field, and received the same warning.

9. The same woman once told a man who had dug up the upper part of a human skull, and placed it on top of his head in sport, that he would meet with some misfortune.

10. THE DEVIL’S FOOTSTEP. — “The Indians had discovered, about a mile west of the Court-House, Brockville, a sloping rock in which appeared a track made apparently by indenture in the rock of the foot of a man with a moccasin on. This rock became known as the Devil’s Rock.”<sup>2</sup>

11. BURIED TREASURE. — Two old Irishmen once dug for a treasure supposedly buried near the western end of the Roebuck prehistoric Indian village site. It seems that the location of the spot had been revealed by a clairvoyant. The two men repaired to the spot at midnight, and dug down until they heard their shovels on the treasure-chest; but just then a yoke of spectral oxen and their driver appeared. One of the men exclaimed, “By God, look at that!” and with that the treasure disappeared. The hole these men dug may still be seen.

I was told that the man, in speaking, broke the spell; for, in order successfully to raise a treasure, absolute silence must be maintained.

bird becomes cold. If the flesh of the bird, when cold, assumes a dark color, it is believed that the cure is effected, and that the virus has been extracted from the sufferer; if, however, . . . the flesh retains its natural color, then the poison has been absorbed into the system of the bitten person.” See also Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 140, for a similar cure for insect-bites.

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is merely a transference of the Irish belief in the inviolability of the fairy forts or raths.

<sup>2</sup> From History of Leeds and Grenville, Ontario, 1749–1879, by T. W. H. Leavitt (Brockville, 1879), p. 197.

The story is also told of another spot a short distance southwest of the Roebuck village site. Here, however, the apparition consisted of two large sows.<sup>1</sup>

12. THE GIFT OF FORESIGHT. — "At an early date there lived in the vicinity of Kilmarnock, on the north side of the Rideau River, a man by the name of Crouch, who claimed to have the gift of foresight. Many old and respected settlers believed that he received warnings of the approaching death of any person who resided in the settlement. According to the testimony of his wife, who bore the reputation of being a Christian woman, Crouch would frequently retire to bed, where in vain would he seek slumber; restless and uneasy, he would toss from side to side, at times groaning and muttering names of the departed. Do what he would to shake off the mysterious spell, in the end he was compelled to submit. Rising, he would quickly dress himself, take his canoe and paddle across the river, where he declared he always found waiting a spectral funeral-procession, which he would follow to the graveyard, where all the rites and ceremonies would be performed. Crouch, having watched the ghostly mourners fade away, would then return home, retire to rest, and sink into a profound slumber. It was always with the greatest difficulty that Mrs. Crouch could ever elicit from her husband the name of the party whose death had been heralded. It is related of the late Samuel Rose, that upon one occasion [when] he was in the company of Crouch, in crossing a common, both saw a light. Crouch exclaimed, "Did you hear that cry?" — "No!" replied Mr. Rose. "Oh!" said the fatalist, "it was the cry of a child," the name of which he gave. In a few days the child breathed its last. Upon another occasion he predicted the death of a man named McIntyre. Colonel Hurd of Burritt's Rapids informs us that he knew Crouch, and that far and wide he was regarded with terror by the children, who had learned from their parents his supposed power of communing with the spirits of the departed."<sup>2</sup>

#### BOOK RHYMES.

(For "Preface.")

13.

P for Peter,  
R for roe,  
E for Elizabeth,  
F for foe,  
A for Anne,  
C for cat,  
E for Elizabeth,  
Long-tailed rat.

(V. B. Hutton.)

<sup>1</sup> In many of these buried-treasure stories the apparitions usually appear in order to draw forth some exclamation from the diggers.

<sup>2</sup> History of Leeds and Grenville, etc., p. 88.

14. Peter  
Ross  
Eats  
Fish,  
Alligators  
Catch  
Eels,  
Eels  
Catch  
Alligators,  
Father  
Eats  
Raw  
Potatoes.<sup>1</sup>

(V. B. H.)

COUNTING-OUT RHYMES.

15. Eeeney, meeeny, miny, moe, etc. (Same as in Oxford and Waterloo Counties, No. 127, p. 150; from V. B. H.)

16. Eeeny, meeeny, mony, my,  
Bacelony, bony, sty,  
Ara-wara, brown bear,  
Acka-wacka, we, wo, wack.  
(J. Hutton.)

17. Airy, eyery, ickory, Ann,  
Fillicy, fallacy, Nicholas, John,  
Avey, quavey, Nicholas, Navy,  
Stickelum, stackelum, buck.  
(V. B. H.)

18. Mumbly, mumbly in the pot,  
How many monkeys have I got?  
One, two, three, and out goes he.  
(V. B. H.)

19. In another, one of the players says, "My mother sent me down street to buy a new dress," and then, pointing at one of the others, asks, "Which color do you like best?" The player responds with the name of a color, say, "white." The first player then spells it out, and the one on whom the last letter falls is "out." (V. B. H.)

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, OTTAWA.

<sup>1</sup> I collected the same rhyme at Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, in 1913.